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TAGS: [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: KUDOS ON JAPANESE REPORTING AND ADVOCACY

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[Z.](#) TOKYO 2780

Classified By: EAP Acting A/S John Norris

[11.](#) (U) As we in Washington are well aware, the last few months have been very challenging ones for staff at Embassy Tokyo and the consulates. You have been forced to juggle responsibilities associated with Japan's G-8 year, a busy summer transfer season, and Washington's need for information about recent political changes -- all at the same time. We know that this has not been easy, and we want you to know how grateful we are for your hard work in the field. We would like to call attention to Mission Japan's exemplary work.

[12.](#) (U) We would like to start by expressing appreciation for the efforts of all of Embassy Tokyo -- particularly its GSO section -- for managing the many responsibilities associated with Japan's G-8 Summit in Hokkaido. Despite a shortage of available funding and officers, you provided an outstanding level of support to U.S. Government visitors to a variety of summits in locations throughout Japan. A special thanks to those officers from Embassy Tokyo and the consulates who traveled to Hokkaido to pitch in and help.

[13.](#) (U) On that note, our Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES) wished to contribute the following for inclusion in this kudos message:

"Robert Cekuta, Kevin Maher, Bart Cobbs, and Ronald Cherry provided substantive information and support on important issues relevant to the G8 Science and Technology Ministerial Meeting (G8 STMM) held in Okinawa on June 15, 2008. The topics of the G8 STMM included international cooperation on

research and development for the realization of a low-carbon society, science and technology cooperation with African countries and other developing countries, and cooperation of research and development resources. These officers were instrumental in contributing to the success of the ten-member USG delegation to the G-8 STMM, which was headed by DOE Under Secretary of Science Raymond Orbach. Additionally, Chimi Miyajima, FSN at Embassy Tokyo, provided unparalleled superior logistical support for the delegation, and deserves to be commended for her hard work."

¶14. (U) We would also like to call attention to the excellent scenesetter cables prepared by economic, political and EST staff for U.S. Government officials who participated in G-8 meetings. Tokyo 841, Tokyo 1230, Tokyo 1383, Tokyo 1505, Tokyo 1817, and Tokyo 2303 all provided insightful analysis of major issues that was useful not only in preparing U.S. Government visitors for the summits. Those cables have also helped prepare new officers in EAP/J and in other bureaus and offices who arrived during the busy summer rotation. As a set, they will make an excellent briefing book on U.S.-Japan economic issues for some months to come, which will be of particular utility in briefing the transition teams. One senior official in EAP praised Tokyo 1505 as "an outstanding message that explains some of the political context for changes in Japan's policies in ways that affect our interests."

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¶15. (SBU) Tokyo's press section also did a remarkable job in reporting on G-8 developments; your press reports on the G-8 agricultural ministerial, for example, gave us an early heads up about the work Japan was undertaking with Russia to plan the ministerial at a time of heightened sensitivities due to Russia's actions in Georgia. This allowed us to work with the NSC to quickly reach out to the Japanese Government at a critical time to better coordinate our policies on communicating with Russia.

¶16. (U) Had managing the G-8 been your only job this summer, you would already have had your hands full. But it was not -- in addition to those responsibilities, you had to continue doing your own jobs as well. And those jobs became remarkably more demanding as a result of the recent political turmoil in Japan, which has increased our need in Washington for information about the changes that are taking place.

¶17. (U) For example, when Former Prime Minister Fukuda announced on August 1 that he would reshuffle his Cabinet, you drafted, on that same day, a lengthy cable (Tokyo 2122) providing in-depth analysis of each of the most important new appointments that had been announced. This allowed us to comprehensively brief our seventh-floor principals (as well as principals in other agencies) on the news right when it happened. Tokyo 2122 was also praised by staff at other agencies; it seemingly contained something for everyone, from agricultural specialists at the Department of Agriculture to military analysts at the Pentagon. In the days that followed, you delivered us even more first rate analysis of what the appointments were likely to mean for us -- analysis like Tokyo 2238, which considered the views of the business community in determining what the new cabinet would mean for the economic reform agenda.

¶18. (SBU) PM Fukuda's abrupt resignation announcement September 1 challenged Post to quickly provide insights on what this development would mean for U.S.-Japan relations. Post rose to the challenge, sending us a comprehensive cable (Tokyo 2400) that same day outlining what the resignation would mean for us. Thanks to your hard work, we were able to answer questions from seventh floor principals on the same morning we learned about the news, helping us to once again look smart. You followed this up with a series of cables such as Tokyo 2416, Tokyo 2443, and Tokyo 2780 predicting the timing of likely scenarios that agencies such as USTR have praised as instrumental in helping us to plan our future

engagement with the Japanese government. Tokyo 2503 and Tokyo 2639 were particularly noteworthy for their timeliness and utility to readers in Washington.

19. (U) Other cables are deserving of praise as well, including the following:

(SBU) Tokyo 1477 provided a very timely explanation of the challenges and opportunities for Japan-China relations. It generated high levels of interest within various offices here in State, and was eventually used to brief the Secretary herself.

(U) Tokyo 1495, which reported on the recent ousting of the directors of a mid-sized Japanese company by a group of investors led by controversial U.S. fund Steel Partner, was read with great interest by a number of policymakers in Washington. We welcomed the cable's report not only on the development itself, but also its inclusion of the views of respected figures in Japan on what this will mean for the future of corporate governance in the country.

(C) Tokyo 1541 ("Japanese Prime Minister Meets President Ahmadinejad") was an extremely timely message that enabled us to brief Secretary Rice on this important subject prior to her discussion on this topic with new Japanese Ambassador Fujisaki. In particular the embassy's insightful comment helped us explain the reasons PM Fukuda agreed to this meeting, information that helped us suggest an appropriate reply by the Secretary.

(U) Sometimes the nature of fast-moving events requires us to request immediate action and advocacy on an issue, such as the July 31 occasion when Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) instructed importers to implement mandatory testing for PSP toxins in lobster originating in the northeastern United States. At a time when we were under a great deal of pressure on this issue from Members of Congress and other interested parties, your immediate advocacy and daily updates (including Tokyo 2105 and 2187) were instrumental in helping defuse this problem. Your outstanding

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response won praise from a variety of offices both here in Washington (including Members of Congress) and in New England.

(SBU) Tokyo 2108 was an insightful cable that was praised by our Economic Bureau and by officials at the Department of Commerce for its profile of Japan's new civil aviation leadership. This kind of proactive reporting is of great use in preparing negotiators from EEB for their continuing talks with their Japanese counterparts.

(SBU) Tokyo 2110 ("Japan's Agenda on Regional Economic Integration") provided a fascinating analysis of Japan's strategy for regional economic integration. It was also delivered at a crucial time -- just before serious discussions began in Washington on the possibility of initiating expanded P-4 FTA negotiations with Japan. As such, it played a major role in informing our discussions about this issue. Please keep up the good work by continuing to report on Japan's FTA/EPA strategy, including its ongoing negotiations with Australia. This cable was also selected for kudos by staff at the Department of Commerce.

(C) Tokyo 2168, on Japan's declining business with Iran, was read with great interest by various offices here in State. We called attention to it in morning meetings with senior officials and used it for other briefing materials we later produced. We are very appreciative of reporting that covers the Iran angle, and urge you to continue looking into this issue.

(SBU) Tokyo 2206 ("First Look at Japan's New Consumer Agency") covered an issue that is of great interest to

various agencies in Washington -- the formation of Japan's new consumer agency and what it will mean for U.S. business interests. The cable was timely and well-researched, and was selected for kudos by staff at the Department of Commerce. Continued outstanding analysis like this will play a major role in shaping USG strategy for advocacy on this issue. Please keep up the good work.

(SBU) Tokyo 2729 provided a sobering but useful look at new Prime Minister Aso's economic priorities, including his views on the reform agenda. We appreciate your continuing reporting on this crucial issue.

(SBU) Various agencies here in Washington have commented on your outstanding response to the tainted rice issue. Tokyo 2596 provided an excellent look at the real causes of this crisis, and what its repercussions would be for U.S. interests. It was praised by staff in EAP/EP and in other agencies such as USDA for the comprehensive insights it provided to policymakers in Washington. We also appreciated your sustained and effective advocacy on this issue, the results of which were reported in Tokyo 2631.

(SBU) Tokyo 2745, a scenesetter for PACOM Commander Admiral Keating was a model of clarity and conciseness, ably describing and assessing the challenges posed by Japan's fluid political environment. The cable provided excellent context and grist for the Desk's contribution to a briefing paper on Japan prepared for use by the transition team in November.

¶10. (U) As always, we appreciate your hard work in Embassy Tokyo, and assure you that your cables are read with great interest by officials and analysts in the interagency here in Washington, and your efforts in the field to support U.S. foreign policy are much appreciated. Please keep up the good work.

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